342 advantage, however, that during the rainy season the lower part of the walls absorbes moisture from the ground, which is soaked through, and the solidity of the walls suffers thereby. Some of the richer people, who usually place their dwelling places on a higher level than is usual among the huts of the poor, have the foresight to build the lowest part of the walls of firebricks for this reason, or at least to place their houses on a terrace which has been artificially raised.

The inner and outer walls of the houses remain just as they are, as a rule, and consequently they have the yellow grey color of the street floors. Whitewash of slaked lime was not formerly in use in [363] Turkestan and was introduced only by the Russians. On the other hand the rich people cover the inner walls of their dwellings with stucco work of alabaster, /232/ in the Arabic style. One finds wall frescoes only rarely. These consist of arabesques in the brightest and most vivid colors possible, or else of stylized flowers which always remind me strongly of a story in the Münchner Fliegende Blätter /Munich Broadsides (?)/ according to which a house painter who had been advanced to a room painter put the flowers and leaves on the walls to be decorated by dipping his hands alternately in red and green paint, then pressing them to the wall with outspread fingers and finally adding the stems to the flowers and leaves with a stroke of a brush.

The roofs of the dwellings are erected as simply as the walls. The roof beams, which are usually untrimmed, with only the branches and bark removed, are placed horizontally across two facing walls at a distance from each other of about 70 centimeters, and are fixed in the walls in this position. A layer of brushwood is used which is about twenty centimeters thick. This forms the ceiling of the room, just as it is. The richer people use decorative carved roof beams, and instead of the reeds, short round willow sticks about five centimeters thick, which are laid right next to each other, between one beam and the next, as is shown in Figure 84, p. 66a.

/Figure 84. Caption: Sart Room Ceilings/

In those rare cases when the ceilings of the rooms are made of short boards which are laid perpendicularly across the roof beams, these boards are cut in such a way as to give the impression of being not boards but round sticks of wood. This proves that the original way of construction of the ceilings was of sticks of wood, and therefore it is still considered the norm.

342 Among the rich the ceilings of the rooms are painted, often
363 very artistically, with very intricate and highly complicated arabesques,

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which are composed of the brightest possible blue, red, green and yellow colors; and sometimes gold is also used.

The ceilings which are made, as described above, of beams and reeds, brushwood, wooden sticks or boards, are now covered again with a layer of clay about a foot thick, which likewise consists of loess earth and straw. The clay intended to cover the roofs is prepared with special care, for the horizontal roofs suffer much more from rain and snow than the walls, which are affected by the downpours only /233/ /Figure 85, p. 67a. Caption: A View of Hissar in East Bukhara. (After a photograph by Willy R. Rickmers.)./ /234/ from the side, and in any case dry out again quickly. The clay intended to cover the roofs is mixed with a large quantity of straw, up to fifty per cent, moistened with much water, and then it is left to ferment for about a week, and is stirred frequently. When the material is properly prepared it is put on top of the roof in layers, and each layer is flattened down with the greatest care with bare feet. Those who are flattening down the roofs, usually half-naked workers, move in their work with a dance step which gives them a very comical appearance.

During the rainy season these clay roofs are always covered with a luxurious growth of grass and in early spring with a mass of wild tulips.

Since these flat roofs are exposed in winter to the direct effects of rain and snow, they always develop defects in a relatively short time, and cracks appear, through which water from the rain and snow leaks into the houses. The dogs are particularly hard on these roofs and are always running about on them and harming them with their scratching. For these reasons the layers of clay must be repaired every fall before the rainy season begins, and must be completely replaced from time to time.

The flat houseroofs are a favorite place of abode of the natives: during the hot season people sleep on them, and they are a place where the morning and evening prayers are performed, while on sunny winter days the women perform their domestic tasks there. (Figure 62, p. 20a, p. 173; Figure 85, p. 67a, p. 233; Figure 86, p. 68a.).

The dwelling houses of the natives, which are built in the manner described above, are absolutely fireproof, and during the entire fifteen years of my stay in Central Asia there was never a fire to my knowledge. When the agent of a fire insurance company appeared in Tashkent several years ago, he was greeted with the same kind of hilarity by the people of Tashkent as someone would be among us if he wanted

354 ticularly if they lack an adequate supply of warm clothes and covers as well. Every great cold costs a number of lives in the towns of Turkestan and the natives judge the degree of cold, in the absence of meteorological instruments, by the number of persons frozen to death during the course of a night. In 1879, when the temperature once sank to 27° Centigrade below freezing in Tashkent, in the Sart section of
[171] that town, 126 natives froze to death /238/ in one night. Here one can marvel at the stubborness with which the people hang on to what is traditional. Although the natives have the Russian household establishments before their eyes and are aware of their efficiency, it still does not occur to them to imitate the latter, even when they have the means to do so.

342 The doors which lead from the courts into the living rooms are usually very low, so that one can only pass through by stooping. In most cases, these doors take the place of the window as well, and therefore are present in large numbers in the larger rooms. The doors always consist of two parts which do not move on hinges but on two pegs fixed in the lintel and the threshold. They always push inward and are so small that each time one must open both parts in order to enter.
[353] Among the rich the door wings are usually adorned with artistic intertwining arabesques carved in the wood, or at least painted with bright red, green or blue colors. Since in Turkestan poplar wood, which is not very solid, is used almost exclusively for building and wood carving and it is usually worked and finished before it has completely dried out, the door posts and door wings are always more or less warped as they dry out, and consequently they close either badly or not at all. The fastening of the door is peculiar: outside one part of the door is a short iron chain, and on the other part a peg is fastened ending in a ring. The last link of the chain, which has a slit through it, is hung over this ring. If such doors are to be locked, a padlock is hung on the ring mentioned above.

There are windows only in the houses of the richer people, while the poorer ones must be satisfied with the light entering through the doorway. The window opening in its dimension is always greater horizontally than vertically in private houses, is always found over the door, and therefore in every room there are as many windows as doors. The window opening is either left completely open or it is covered with a grating of wood or alabaster in order to prevent the entrance of swallows and sparrows, of which there is an enormous number here, as well as of other birds. The sticks of which the wooden

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

Embroidery in Turkestan

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In every moderately well-to-do house in Bokhara embroidered cloths serve as wall-coverings, the interesting patterns and brilliant colours of which immediately attract the visitor's eye. A good example of wall-coverings of this type is seen in the picture of a married couple of Bokhara, which was reproduced in Ciba Review No. 10, page 332. What makes them so attractive is the simplicity of the pattern, which, however, on closer inspection proves to be richer than at first supposed. It is embroidered on a background of unbleached cotton, which not only remains visible between the figures, but which is intended to heighten the effect of the whole.

The same artistic taste is revealed in the distribution of the pattern itself. The principal forms are usually large circular flowers dispersed over the surface of the cloth with unfailing sense of rhythm. Between them are smaller floral elements, conventionalized carnations, tulips, and irises, accompanied by twigs and garlands. In spite of its stylized character, the pattern is very vivid in its effect, an effect which owes a great deal to the brightness of the colours. The principal colour is a rich red, supplemented by many other shades of the same colour, and by green, purple, and black.

These susanis as they are called are not only made at Bokhara, but also at Samarkand, Karshi, and in other towns of Turkestan, though not always with the same discriminating artistic taste. They do not serve as wall-coverings only. Narrow strips are used to frame doorways, other pieces serve as prayer-mats, and it

4:Leix U-5 (no date)1941 RL1 Turkestan RL1

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Embroidered wall-hanging of the mountain Tajiks. The figures seen in the pattern are conventionalized peacocks, and probably continue an ancient Persian tradition.

is not regarded as improper to cover the biers on which the dead are borne to rest with these colourful textiles.

These embroideries form part of a larger group which has not yet received the study it deserves. In Western Turkestan alone there are two other kinds in addition to the susanis, each of these is the heritage of a different tribe. The Turkomans made ornaments for their tents in the same technique as that of the susanis. Pentagonal pieces were embroidered by the Salors as decorations for tent-openings,

4: Leix U-5 (no date) 1941 Rl.1 Turkestan Rl.1

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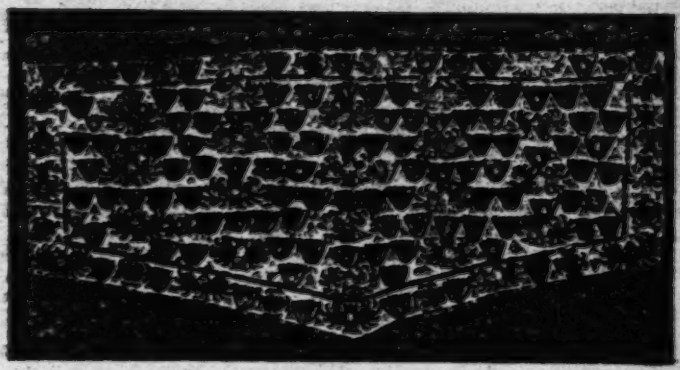

Embroidered tent ornament of the Salors which is hung above the tent-opening. The figures of the pattern are stylized flowers.

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very much like those which they knotted. It is possible that they were used for the summer tents (see ill. page 1464). As is the case with all nomad work of this kind, the patterns are severely stylized. There is, however, no doubt that they are derived from floral patterns, and that the embroideries of the Salors are to be regarded as a variety of the susanis.

Hangings in the houses of the Tajiks (see ill. page 1464), who inhabit the mountainous regions to the south-east of Bokhara, show patterns of a very different character. Isolated as they are in a remote area, the Tajiks have retained many characteristics of an archaic civilization (confer page 1441). Among these must be numbered the embroidered fabrics made public by Count Bobrinskoi forty years ago. The principal elements in their patterns are birds arranged in pairs and in rows. They are so severely stylized that only the tufts on their heads permit of them being identified as peacocks. They represent an ancient formal tradition of the Orient, which goes back to the pre-Islamic period, and which can be traced without interruption down to the present day. In

[See p. 84--Analyst]
[See p. 83--Analyst]
[See p. 23--Analyst]

531 [353] the remote mountain districts of Central Asia the forms have been handed down so carefully that the figure of the bird has retained traces of medieval stylization.

Embroideries discovered by Le Coq in sparsely populated districts of Eastern Turkestan are in technique and design frequently almost identical with the susanis of Bokhara. They show the same stylized flower-patterns in the same combination of colours, usually as decorations of women's trousers (tambal). It may, therefore, be assumed that the style of the susanis is characteristic of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia.

More than twenty years ago Le Coq reported that such embroidery was no longer being made in Eastern Turkestan. The examples that he saw had been made by the mothers of 656 the generation then living. In Western Turkestan the tradition not only exists to this day, 562 but the government has set up special workshops where the women embroider susanis. This is part of the policy by means of which the state seeks to draw women out of the secluded life of the harem.

352 The same principle applies to housing and furniture. The natives adopt
177 freely and widely articles of utility, such as kerosene lamps, samovars, and iron stoves. But they resist efforts of the authorities to introduce chairs, tables, and bedsteads, which to them seem quite unnecessary. "Not only those collective farm families sleep on the floor which as yet have no bedsteads," writes a recent Soviet observer of conditions in the Kirghiz republic. "Sometimes a purchased bedstead, instead of being used for its purpose, stands all made up as a decoration, while the family continues sleeping on the floor." [8] Even the most Westernized Muslim intelligentsia in the cities demonstrate a desire to preserve a link with tradition by decorating a single room of an otherwise Western-style apartment in the native manner.

342 House construction among the old settled groups of the population seems
177 to follow traditional lines, with minor innovations, such as the use of whitewash for the walls and floors. Among the recently settled nomads, whom the Soviet regime wishes to have acquire permanent buildings, a curious compromise has been attained: the natives spend one part of their time in the permanent structures and another part in the traditional yurt (nomadic tent) erected alongside the houses. On the whole, one gains the impression that among the Turkic groups which had been settled during and since the period of collectivization, the yurt continues to prevail, while in the mountains it is still the exclusive shelter of native inhabitants.

183 The general picture which emerges from a survey of native customs
177 indicates that they are adhered to far more loyally than are religious traditions. The causes for this are threefold. In the first place, a considerable part of the native population of Central Asia was only superficially affected by Islam, while remaining loyal to local traditions. In the second place, national traditions are on the whole not contrary to the spirit of Westernization, and can in most cases be well adapted to the demands of a secular, utilitarian society. And, finally, the Soviet regime treats local customs far more gingerly than religion, trying to destroy them more through example and infiltration than through outright suppression. The native population clings to its customs, surrendering them only when they are utterly incompatible with material progress of society, and when it does modify traditions, it tries to synthesize the innovations with tradition. The native may be persuaded that it is a good thing to possess an iron bedstead, but often he cannot be convinced that sleeping on a bed is preferable to sleeping on the floor. Similarly, he may agree that eating by fork and spoon is hygenically preferable to eating by hand, but he refuses to agree that pork and potatoes are superior to lamb and rice. This attitude gives native customs a considerable resiliency to external pressures.

[8] S. M. Abramzon, *Ocherki kul'tury kirgizskogo naroda* (Frunze, 1946), p. 75. Abramzon's book supplies interesting data on the culture of the Kirghiz in the post-World War II era, much of which supports the conclusions derived from interviews with refugees.

1 [i.e., the discarding of traditions for no reasons other than utility -- Analyst]